



News Release

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The Library of Michigan Announces the 2013 Michigan Notable Books

20 books celebrating Michigan people, places, and events

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LANSING - The Library of Michigan today announced the 2013 Michigan Notable Books – 20 books celebrating Michigan people, places and events.

“This year’s selections again exemplify the extraordinary resources, people, talent, and history we have here in Michigan,” said State Superintendent Mike Flanagan. “Our Notable Books for 2013 are important for everyone to learn about Michigan’s enduring success and promising future.”

Books featuring topics as varied as a physically-challenged kid from Flint who went on to win an Olympic Gold Medal and pitch a no-hitter for the New York Yankees; the 1968 Detroit Tigers, survival of the Kirtland warbler, a biography of Michigan’s first governor, northwest Michigan’s Fishtown, the revival of Detroit, saving the Theodore Roethke’s house, Michigan’s historic train stations, a memoir of a Detroit soul singer, a study of Michigan’s amphibians and reptiles, depression era Flint and an illustrated history of Detroit’s historic places of worship are all part of this year’s list.

The program provides the Library of Michigan with a unique opportunity to promote exploring Michigan authors and stories, to examine the colorful history of the state and to encourage reading.

“The books selected as Michigan Notable Books are just the tip of the iceberg of all of the great stories Michigan authors have to tell. Each year the selection committee chooses books that highlight the diversity found in our great state,” said State Librarian Nancy Robertson.

Robertson added, “This program successfully shines the spotlight on the number of talented writers and illustrators we have in Michigan. These books help to tell Michigan’s story. Our ‘home’ is a place where history, talent and a having special connection to our cultural heritage is greatly valued.”

Annually the Michigan Notable Books (MNB) list features 20 books published in the previous calendar year that are about Michigan or the Great Lakes region, or are written by a Michigan author. Selections include nonfiction and fiction books that appeal to a variety of audiences and cover a range of topics and issues close to the hearts of Michigan residents.

Michigan Notable Books is a statewide program that began as part of the 1991 Michigan Week celebration, geared to pay tribute and draw attention to many people, places and things that make Michigan life unique. In that regard, the MNB program successfully features Michigan books and writers focusing on the literary talents found in the Great Lakes State.

Each title on the 2013 list gives readers insight into what it means to make your home in Michigan and proves some of the greatest stories are indeed found in the Great Lakes region. The Michigan Notable Books program is “Pure Michigan.”

This year's Michigan Notable Books selection committee includes representatives from the Library of Michigan; the Archives of Michigan; Cooley Law School; Grand Rapids Public Library; *Lansing City Pulse*; Michigan Center for the Book; Michigan Humanities Council and Schuler Books & Music.

For more information about the MNB program, call 517 373-1300, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/notablebooks> or email rileyrl@michigan.gov

2013 Michigan Notable Books

***American Poet: A Novel* by Jeff Vande Zande (Bottom Dog Press)**

Saginaw, Michigan is the setting for this short novel, a coming of age story of a young poet returning home after graduating from college. Vande Zande's story circles from documenting the survival of a failed relationship, finding beauty and value in a broken city, locating common ground with an aging father and orchestrating a plan to save the Theodore Roethke House. This beautifully written book champions the power of poetry and gives a solid voice to society's underdogs.

***The Amphibians and Reptiles of Michigan* by J. Alan Holman (Wayne State University Press)**

All of Michigan's 54 species of amphibians and reptiles are covered in this unique and illustrated single volume. This well-written collection should be welcomed by herpetologists, vertebrate paleontologists, zoologists, ecologists and general biologists. With minimal scientific jargon, Holman presents a discussion of habitat, includes recent species accounts and distribution across the state.

***Balthazar Korab Architect of Photography* by John Comazzi (Princeton Architectural Press)**

Comazzi for the first time captures the story of the life and career of one of Michigan's most eminent photographers. Almost 200 images of Korab's work along with a collection of more than 100 images from his portfolio of professionally commissioned architecture photography are included. Previously unpublished and unseen photographs from Korab's archives also are included.

***Bear Has a Story to Tell* by Phillip C. Stead, illustrated by Erin E. Stead (Roaring Brook Press)**

The creators of the Caldecott-winning *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* offer another charming story about the reciprocal nature of friendship. Before settling down to hibernate for the winter, Bear wants to share a story with his friends, but frog, mole, duck and mouse are all too busy preparing for winter to listen. This beautifully illustrated book, through the use of lively water colors, captures an endearing story of friendship and patience.

***The Boy Governor: Stevens T. Mason and the Birth of Michigan Politics* by Don Faber (University of Michigan Press)**

The Boy Governor tells the complete story of Michigan's first governor and dominant political figure in the state's early development. Faber successfully captures Mason's youthful idealism and visionary accomplishments, including his advocacy for a strong state university and fighting for the creation of the Soo Locks. This biography presents a vivid portrait of the 'boy governor's' conflicts, desires and sense of patriotism. Mason's story will appeal to readers with an interest in Michigan history or in stories about larger-than-life personalities from the past.

***Canada* by Richard Ford (Ecco)**

When 15-year-old Dell Parsons' parents rob a bank, his sense of a normal life is forever altered. *Canada* successfully tells a story with rich language and dialogue filled with suspense, bleakness and human frailties and flaws. Ford masterfully aligns Dell's emotions with the desolate landscape of the novel's setting. The story is equal parts coming-of-age story and a touching story about the discovery of identity.

***Death Dance of a Butterfly* by Melba Joyce Boyd (Past Tents Press)**

Boyd's latest poetry offering is an insightful examination of her relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. She writes of the complexities, joys and sadness of lives shared and the influences of daily living on them. Detroit comes alive in her powerful poems filled with touching human interactions and eulogies to loved ones.

***Detroit City Is the Place to Be* by Mark Binelli (Metropolitan Books)**

Binelli successfully captures the pride, grit and hope Detroiters demonstrate as they fight to revitalize one of America's great cities. Once a capitalist dream town, today Detroit is too often pointed to as the nation's greatest urban failure. The city's current crisis has managed to do the unthinkable; turn the end of days into a laboratory for the future. Urban planners, land speculators, agriculturalists and utopian environmentalists all have been drawn to Detroit's baroquely decaying, nothing-left-to-lose frontier.

***Detroit's Historic Places of Worship* compiled and edited by Marla O. Collum, Barbara E. Krueger and Dorothy Kostuch, photographs by Dirk Bakker with a forward by John Gallagher (Wayne State University Press)**

Nearly 20 years in the making, Collum, Krueger and Kostuch thoroughly document 37 architecturally and historically significant places of worship that represent eight denominations and nearly 150 years of history. Detroit's most prolific era of church building (1850s to 1930s) is detailed in chronological order. Each chapter provides information on the each congregation's founding and highlights the developments and changes to the present day. Information was

gathered from public sources, church archives and oral histories of clergy, staff and parishioners to tell a complete story of each church. Bakker's interior and exterior photographs help to bring these stunning buildings to life.

Dust to Dust: A Memoir by Benjamin Busch (Ecco)

Dust to Dust is an extraordinary memoir about ordinary things: life and death, peace and war, the adventures of childhood and the revelations of adulthood. Busch is a decorated U.S. Marine Corps infantry officer who served two combat tours in Iraq, an actor on *The Wire*, and the son of celebrated novelist Frederick Busch. In elemental-themed chapters Busch tells a story of an ideal childhood in rural New York exploring wood and streams and about deployment to Iraq and the horrors of war. The emotional power of his reflections on life, love, death and war make this memoir hard to put down and hard to forget.

Fishtown: Leland Michigan's Historic Fishery by Laurie Sommers (Arbutus Press)

In her new book, *Fishtown* author Laurie Kay Sommers tells the story of this beloved place's past and present through the remembrances of the commercial fishermen and ferry captains who have worked out of Fishtown since 1900. There are harrowing tales of rough seas, near misses and devastating losses, and the reasons why so many fishermen would choose this life all over again.

Imperfect by Jim Abbott/Tim Brown (Ballantine Books)

Born without a right hand, Jim Abbott dreamed of someday being a great athlete. Raised in Flint, Michigan, Abbott would become an ace pitcher in the major leagues. In this honest and insightful book, Abbott reveals the challenges he faced in becoming an elite pitcher, the insecurities he dealt with in a life spent as the different one, and the intense emotion generated by his encounters with physically-challenged children from around the country.

Ink Trails by Jack Dempsey and Dave Dempsey (Michigan State University Press)

Long revered as the birthplace of many of the nation's best-known authors, Michigan also has served as inspiration to countless others. In this entertaining and well-researched book—the first of its kind—the secrets, legends, and myths surrounding some of Michigan's literary luminaries are explored. This book is a rich literary history that highlights the diversity of those whose impact on letters has been indelible and distinctly Michigan.

Kirtland's Warbler by William Rapai (University of Michigan Press)

William Rapai explores the bird's fascinating natural history as well as the complex and evolving relationships between the warbler, its environment, its human protectors, and state and federal policies that today threaten to eradicate decades of work done on the species' behalf. Beginning with an account of the warbler's discovery, the book goes on to examine the dramatic events that quickly led to the warbler's precarious status and its eventual emergence as a lightning rod for controversy.

***Michigan's Historic Railroad Stations* by Michael Hodges (Wayne State University Press)**

In *Michigan's Historic Railroad Stations*, writer and photographer Michael H. Hodges presents depots ranging from functioning Amtrak stops (Jackson) to converted office buildings (Battle Creek) and spectacular abandoned wrecks (Saginaw and Detroit) to highlight the beauty of these iconic structures and remind readers of the key role architecture and historic preservation play in establishing an area's sense of place.

***Mighty Miss Malone* by Christopher Paul Curtis (Wendy Lamb Books)**

Deza Malone lives in Michigan in the 1930s. Her family is poor but hardworking and funny. Deza is smart and tries hard to be the smartest person possible. When the Depression hits and Deza's dad is involved in a terrible accident, the family is put to very trying tests. From train-hopping to Hoovervilles, from rotting teeth to a speakeasy, Christopher Paul Curtis allows the reader an inside view of a family in Depression-era Michigan.

***Skeleton Box* by Bryan Gruley (Touchstone Books)**

In *The Skeleton Box*, the third of the "Starvation Lake" mysteries, author Bryan Gruley pulls off a remarkable triple play he: writes a suspenseful mystery, creates characters that reek of realistic human faults and foibles, and effectively draws the novel's tone, atmosphere and mood so that the reader is pulled into the darkness that envelops the town of Starvation Lake. Bingo night has never looked like this before.

***Summer of '68* by Tim Wendel (Da Capo Press)**

In *Summer of '68*, Tim Wendel takes us on a wild ride through a season that saw pitching legends set new standards for excellence, baseball set against the backdrop of one of the most divisive and turbulent years in American history. In Detroit—which had burned just the summer before during one of the worst riots in American history—'68 found the city rallying together behind a colorful Tigers team led by Denny McLain, Mickey Lolich, Willie Horton, and Al Kaline.

***Woman Like Me* by Bettye LaVette (Blue Rider Press)**

Bettye LaVette's, *A Woman Like Me*, chronicles her decades-long career as singer on the fringes of the Motown greats and soul legends. She has come close to breaking out in the industry on so many occasions only to find things fall through in the end. *A Woman Like Me* details the long journey to success, but is also filled with frank gossip and stories told about the star singers LaVette met on her way.

***World of A Few Minutes Ago* by Jack Driscoll (Wayne State University Press)**

In *The World of a Few Minutes Ago*, award-winning author Jack Driscoll renders 10 stories from the point of view of characters aged 14 to 77 with a consistently deep understanding of each character's internal world and emotional struggles. All of the stories are set against the quiet, powerful northern Michigan landscape and share a sense of longing, amplified by the beautiful but often unforgiving surroundings.

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The Library of Michigan – Michigan's official state library agency for more than 175 years – is part of the Michigan Department of Education. To learn more, visit www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan